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A Decade of Distinction: Commemorating #AntanasPoška's Conferment at the #CalcuttaUniversity.
We mark a significant milestone: the 11th anniversary of the posthumous conferment of a doctoral degree upon the celebrated Lithuanian traveler, anthropologist, and Indologist, Dr. Antanas Poška, by the prestigious University of Calcutta (CU).
The Posthumous Honour: A Testament to Enduring Scholarly Ties
On November 28, 2014, a long-cherished aspiration, realized through the joint, dedicated efforts of the Lithuanian Embassy in New Delhi and Arvind Kumar Sukhani, then a friend and now the Honorary Consul of Lithuania in #Kolkata, culminated in a historic ceremony. The University of Calcutta posthumously awarded Poška the D.Litt. (Doctor of Letters) degree. The regalia were graciously received by his daughter, Ms. Laimutė Poškaitė.
The solemn occasion was presided over by the then-Chancellor of the University and Governor of West Bengal, Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi, with the esteemed presence of the then-President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee.
This indelible connection was further cemented on January 16, 2015, with the unveiling of a commemorative marble plaque at the university's library. This installation holds particular historical importance as it represents the first permanent marker of Lithuania on Indian soil.
The Historical Journey: From #Kaunas to #Calcutta
Antanas Poška's profound interest was sparked by the linguistic similarities between Lithuanian and Sanskrit, driving his ambition to study Indian culture and explore the cultural links between the two nations.
• The Epic Motorbike Expedition: In November 1929, Poška began his historic motorbike journey from Kaunas, Lithuania, arriving in India in 1931.
• Scholarly Pursuits in India: He pursued higher studies, first at the University of Bombay and then at the University of Varanasi, where he delved into Sanskrit. His academic pursuits led him to translate the Bhagavad Gita (manuscript lost) and the Rigveda (preserved at the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania) into Lithuanian.
• Calcutta and Anthropology: In 1933, Poška enrolled in the University of Calcutta, submitting his seminal Ph.D. thesis in physical anthropology in 1936.
Notable Encounters and Literary Contributions
During his time in #Bengal, Poška had the privilege of meeting the revered poet #RabindranathTagore, whose works he subsequently translated into Lithuanian. His travels also afforded him the rare opportunity to meet #MahatmaGandhi twice (in Bombay and Allahabad), receiving a decorative hand-made cloth from the Father of the Nation, which he preserved through various hardships.
The legacy of Antanas Poška stands as a beacon of intellectual curiosity and the deep-rooted cultural and scholarly exchange between #Lithuania and #India.

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Bengal honour for Baltic biker boy
Lithuanian diplomat Diana Mickeviciene in Calcutta. Picture by B. Halder. (R) Anthropologist Antanas Paskevicius-Poska, who was a student of Calcutta University in the 1930s

TRIBUTE TO BALTIC SCHOLAR
The ambassador of Lithuania, Laimonas Talat-Kelpsa, poses alongside a marble plaque he unveiled in the library of Calcutta University on Friday. With him are his wife Alina Talunyte and Arvind Sukhani, who liaised with the university for the installation of the plaque on behalf of Lithuania. The plaque commemorates the conferring of a DLitt degree on anthropologist Antanas Paskevicius-Poska last November for his contribution to Indology studies by the university, where he did his postgraduation and even started his PhD in the mid-1930s. "Imagine a man starting off from Lithuania on a bike with India as his destination in an age when communication was so difficult. Today his name is embedded in a corner of Calcutta," said the ambassador. "We wanted his name to stay in a place where generations of students can see it and learn of his contribution. This reflects back to our glorious past when students from so far abroad came to CU," said the pro-vice chancellor for academic affairs, Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, who was also present. Picture by Asagi Bhattacharya